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Ca' Foscari  
University  
of Venice

Department of  
Philosophy and  
Cultural Heritage

THE NEW  
INSTITUTE

Centre for Environmental  
Humanities (NICHE)  
at Ca' Foscari  
University of Venice

**FARE**  
RICERCA IN ITALIA  
FRAMEWORK PER L'ATTRAZIONE E IL RAFFORZAMENTO  
DELLE ECCELLENZE PER LA RICERCA IN ITALIA

**October 30, 2024**

10.00-12.00 (CET)  
Ca' Bottacin, Yellow  
Room, Dorsoduro 3911

Chair: **Roberta Raffaetà**  
(Department of Philosophy and  
Cultural Heritage)

Discussants: **Francesca  
Tarocco** (NICHE), **Mankei Tam**  
(Department of Philosophy and  
Cultural Heritage)



This project has received funding from the FARE Programme "SHK\_HealthXCross project: Microbiome technoscience in Shanghai and Hong Kong in pandemic times. An anthropological study" - ID R20A8R2WH4, funded by the Italian Ministry for University and Research (MUR).

**Anna Lora-Wainwright**

Professor of the Human Geography of China, School of Geography and the Environment and School of Global and Area Studies, University of Oxford

## **From Anti-incineration Activism to 'Sustainable Living': Some Reflections on Forms of Environmentalism in Contemporary China**

This talk draws on two decades of research on various aspects of environmental activism and focuses especially on ongoing collaborative work with Thomas Johnson and Katherine Yuet Wong in Hangzhou, which explores grassroots initiatives broadly encapsulated by the emic term "sustainable living". Given the steady tightening on civil society in the past decade, forms of subtle and everyday activism are taking on a special significance. We propose the concept of "prefigurative politics" to make sense of these forms of action—ranging from buying food

in bulk/refill shops and collecting recyclables to establishing and promoting field-to-table vegetarian restaurants in rural and peri-urban sites—and the hopes and aspirations of those who embrace them. We argue that these actions embody efforts to reclaim agency and articulate subjectivity and care between private and public spheres. In doing so, we question the binary between "everyday environmentalism" and contentious collective action and promote a more nuanced understanding of agency, subjectivity, and ethics.